

Another pipeline explosion kills three in Lagos

A pipeline explosion last Saturday morning rocked Ijegun town in Ikotun, a suburb of Lagos, and killed a six year old girl.

The victim, Ejiró Oghene Bamidele, was said to be washing her clothes when the deadly explosion hit her.

Daily Trust gathered another explosion occurred at the Festac town and wounded at least five people. The victims were said to be scoo-

By Suleiman Mohammed and Mohammed Shosanya, Lagos

ping fuel after vandalising the petroleum pipeline.

Witnesses said the explosion at Ijegun was caused by the activities of pipeline vandals who are scooping fuel. It started around 9am throwing residents in the area into confusion as they ran helter-skelter for cover.

stop convention

the Murtala Mohammed Square in the state capital, without giving any reason for its action.

AC said with the 22 airports in the country, all under the control of the federal government, 'it is obvious who is behind the sudden closure of the Kaduna airport, as well as the identity of the puppeteer that is tele-guiding the state government'.

The AC said: "We condemn, in the strongest terms possible, this misuse of state power against a duly registered political party in a democratic dispensation. We can only hope that this action, coming a few months to the 2007 general elections, is not a foretaste of what to expect from those in control of the instruments of

coercion."

AC wondered why the PDP-led federal government is being jittery about another party's convention, if it had performed as creditably as its leaders have 'been claiming in their well-synchronised string of deception'.

The party re-stated its earlier warning that President Olusegun Obasanjo and his ruling party, going by their anti-democratic actions, seem bent on pushing Nigeria into a state of anarchy just to realise their hidden ambitions.

"We call on all Nigerians to be vigilant to thwart any move to return our country to those dark days and to truncate our fledgling democracy," AC said.

Today's convention is expected to produce the party's top executive members.

The fire was later put off around 6pm by the combined team of the men of the Lagos state fire service.

The village head of Ijegun, Alhaji Tajudeen Suberu, told journalists that the presence of the vandals in the area was noticed about a year ago.

He said he times without number laid the complain with the authorities of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), which they did not treat with the agency it deserved.

The Asiwaju of Festac town, Wole Abisoro, took a swipe at the NNPC authorities. He said the authorities ignored several letters he forwarded to them on the activities of the vandals in the area.

When our correspondent visited the site of the explosion on Sunday, there were two jerry cans loaded with fuel. Some of the tools of the vandals, like chisels and hammers, were also seen littered on the site.

With the latest explosion, there are palpable fears the NNPC may reduce supply of petroleum products to the Mosimi depot of the Pipeline Products Marketing Company (PPMC) for repair works to be executed on the damaged pipeline.

Observers believe this

development will automatically give room for scarcity of petroleum products in some parts of western Nigeria.

The group public affairs manager of the NNPC, Levi Ajuonuma, could not be reached for comments on the explosion and possible cut in the supply of petroleum products.

Daily Trust recalled that the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR) in its September 2006 report said the western pipeline axis of the PPMC recorded a loss of 23,735.00 metric tonnes of petroleum products as a result of pipeline vandalism.

19,056 of this loss however came from Atlas Cove-Mosimi location which falls on the axis of the latest pipeline explosion.

The spate of pipeline vandalism has caused the nation a heavy loss in recent times. The group managing director of the NNPC, Engineer Funso Kupolokun, said recently at a stakeholders' forum in Lagos that from 1,121 cases of pipeline vandalism recorded in 2000, the practice grew two fold to 2,248 in 2005.

According to him, the NNPC recorded a loss of over 650,000 metric tonnes of products to theft through pipeline vandalism.